Pol 14 Viets (1560)

Department of State **TELEGRAM**

XR Pol 15-1 Viets

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44
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 RSR-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-06 H-02 INR-06 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 P-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 UPW-01 IO-11 AID-20 INRE-00 /094 W

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O R 231058Z AUG 71 ZFF-1
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9047
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMCONSUL DANANG

UNCLAS SAIGON 13528

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUB: KY PRESS CONFERENCE, AUGUST 23

REF: A. SAIGON 13485
B. SAIGON 13510

1. SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION: AT HIS AUGUST 23 PRESS CONFERENCE VICE PRESIDENT KY ANSWERED REPORTERS' QUESTIONS FOLLOWING HIS STATEMENT OF NON-PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTIONS (REF B).

KY SAID HIS PROPOSAL OF SIMULTANEOUS RESIGNATIONS OFFERED THIEU A CONSTITUTIONAL WAY OUT, DEMANDED THAT THIEU'S SUBORDINATES BE REPLACED WITH IMPARTIAL OFFICIALS, AND REJECTED THE VALIDITY OF THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION AUGUST 21. KY ALSO STATED THAT ALL CONSULTED POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS HAD ADVISED HIM UNANIMOUSLY NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS AND INDICATED THAT THE AUGUST 21 SUPREME COURT DECISION COULD NOT FORCE HIM TO RUN AS A CANDIDATE. END SUMMARY

2. KY CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD MET WITH AMBASSADOR BUNKER

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Ingel DATE 1/26/82
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☐ RELEASABLE☑
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 22 AND HAD ADVISED THE AMBASSADOR OF HIS WITHDRAWAL BY LETTER MORNING AUGUST 23. KY DENIED THAT HE HAD ASKED THE AMBASSADOR TO GUARANTEE THE FAIRNESS OF THE ELECTIONS, STATING "THAT THE ELECTIONS ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE VIETNAMESE ALONE." HE NOTED ALSO THAT "NO AMOUNT OF PRESSURE OR GUARANTTES COULD PRODUCE AN HONEST ELECTION IF IT WERE ORGANIZED BY PRESIDENT THIEU," WHO, HE INSISTED, "IS MORE INTERESTED IN PRESERVING PERSONAL POWER THAN SERVING THE PEOPLE. "

3. WHEN ASKED HIS VIEW OF THE ARGUMENT, ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN USED BY AMBASSADOR BUNKER, THAT AN UNCONTESTED ELECTION MIGHT RESULT IN CURTAILMENT OF AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO VIET NAM, KY SAID THIS CONSIDERATION HAD CAUSED HIM TO HESITATE BEFORE MAKING HIS DECISION, BUT HE HAD THEN CONCLUDED THAT IT WAS PRESIDENT THIEU WHO HAD PRODUCED THE CURRENT SITUATION AND MUST ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES.

4. KY SAID THAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERS, INCLUDING THE ARCHBISHOP OF SAIGON AND THE AN QUANG BUDDHIST VENERABLES, HAD "UNANIMOUSLY ADVISED HIM NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS." KY NOTED THAT HE HAD NOT CONSULTED GENERAL MINH OTHER THAN MEETING HIM AUGUST 21 BUT AFFIRMED THAT IN THE FUTURE HE WOULD BE COORDINATING HIS ACTIVITIES WITH MINH AND MANY OTHER POLITICAL GROUPS.

5. KY DENIED THAT HIS WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ELECTIONS AND SUGGESTION THAT BOTH HE AND THIEU RESIGN SIMULTANEOUSLY WERE INTENDED "TO FORCE THE PRESIDENT INTO A CORNER." IT IS "RATHER TO PROVIDE HIM WITH A CONSTITUTIONAL WAY OUT" OF THE CURRENT CRISIS. KY STATED THAT WHILE HE WILL NOT DO IT UNILATERALLY HE IS READY TO RESIGN HIS OFFICE TODAY IF THIEU SIMULTANEOUSLY WILL ALSO GIVE UP THE PRESIDENCY.

6. COMMENTING ON THE ASSIGNMENT OF NEW PROVINCE CHIEFS AS NECESSARY FOR HONEST ELECTIONS, KY REPLIED THAT "THIEU AND HIS SUBORDINATES" MUST BE REPLACED WITH IMPARTIAL OFFICIALS.

7. KY AVOIDED A DIRECT ANSWER WHEN ASKED IF HE WOULD LEAD THE PEOPLE IN OVERTHROWING PRESIDENT THIEU. HE ASSERTED THAT HE "WOULDN'T DARE ASSUME THE TITLE OF LEADER OF THE PEOPLE" BUT AFFIRMED THAT HE WAS READY TO FOLLOW THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE AND,

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IF NECESSARY, "TO MAKE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE" OF HIS LIFE.

8. KY STATED THAT HE COULD NOT BE FORCED TO RUN AS A CANDIDATE BY THE AUGUST 21 SUPREME COURT DECISION. ASSERTING THAT "THE ONLY THING THEY CAN DO TO ME NOW IS TO TAKE MY ELECTION DEPOSIT," KY NOTED THAT "THERE MUST BE LIMITS TO THIS FARCE" AND ADDED THAT TO PRINT HIS BALLOT AND FORCE HIM TO RUN WOULD EXCEED THESE BOUNDS.

9. KY ALSO CHARACTERIZED THE SUPREME COURT DECISION AS A "FARCE" AND IRONICALLY COMPARED RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY CHIEF JUSTICE LINH EXCLUDING HIS CANDIDACY WITH THE COURT'S LAST MINUTE REVERSAL OF THE AUGUST 5 POSTING. DESCRIBING THE COURT AS A "SUPREME BEAUTY PARLOR" FOR "CHANGING BLACK INTO WHITE," KY DECLARED THAT HE REJECTED THE COURT'S AUGUST 21 DECISION BECAUSE IT IS "ILLEGAL AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL."

10. KY ALSO PLEDGED TO DONATE HIS 2,000,000 PIASTER CAMPAIGN DEPOSIT, IF RETURNED, TO THE FAMILY OF THE DISABLED VETERAN WHO IMMOLATED HIMSELF AUGUST 16 AND ASKED THE PRESS TO BRING PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT TO REFUN HIS DEPOSIT.
BUNKER

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